

*Californians Against Waste
California Refuse Recycling Council
California State Association of Counties
Inland Empire Disposal Association
Los Angeles County Waste Management Association
Recology
Regional Council of Rural Counties
Republic Services, Inc.
Solid Waste Association of Orange County
Solid Waste Association of North America
Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
Waste Management, Inc.*

June 9, 2009

The Honorable Joe Simitian
Chair, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Room 2205
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Simitian:

Subject: Need to Maintain a Full-time Board Structure to Oversee Solid Waste Programs.

The above listed local government organizations, environmental organizations and companies are writing to you to express our mutual concern with the Department of Finance recommendation to eliminate the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB). Together, we represent the vast majority of stakeholders that work with the CIWMB and their staff on a daily basis. While we as a group do not always agree with the decisions of the Board, we are unified in our support for the Board's accomplishments in reducing waste, protecting public health, safety and the environment and nurturing a growing solid waste recycling infrastructure.

It is our combined experience that a full-time board structure is absolutely essential when overseeing the often-controversial subject of solid waste management. The CIWMB offers extensive opportunity for public access. While we may not always agree with the decisions of the CIWMB, we believe the guiding regulatory principles are clear and consistent – and, most importantly, controversial decisions are made in public.

Protection of human health, public safety and the environment is the very foundation of the CIWMB. As such, the Board and their operations are supported solely from fees generated from solid waste operations. Eliminating the CIWMB or transforming it into a part-time board will not improve protection of human health, public safety or the environment, nor will eliminating the Board or creating a part-time board provide any savings for the State General Fund.

Further, we believe that a full-time board is essential to maintaining effective public oversight of the bureaucracy and to achieving the Board's legislatively mandated responsibilities for waste reduction. Achieving those goals is an important component of the state's strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting renewable energy from waste. We believe that it will be much more difficult to insure that a part-time board will have the necessary expertise or ample opportunity to interact with stakeholders and the public in a manner that will ensure effective implementation of these legislative priorities.

As a group, we support government efficiency and understand that the current economic crisis requires consolidation of state programs. We look forward to the opportunity of working with you and the committee on the consolidation of waste related programs under a full-time board structure with an emphasis on board member qualifications, the size of such a board and the need for specific representation of specific stakeholder groups (e.g., environmental, industry and local government representation).

The Senate Environmental Quality Committee has always placed a strong emphasis on ensuring continued public access to California State government; we hope you will agree that maintaining a fee supported full-time board that places no burden on the General Fund is completely consistent with, and essential to the attainment of this goal.

cc: Office of the Governor
Members of the Senate
Members of the Assembly
Members, California Integrated Waste Management Board